

SETU Nepal

Annual Report 2008

Submitted by

SETU NEPAL

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Executive Summary

The year 2008 witnessed momentous changes in Nepal. This year Nepal held the historic election for Constituent Assembly which catapulted the Maoists, hitherto waging guerilla war, to power holding rein of the government, and also made it a leading political party in the constituent assembly. They laid down arms in favor of peaceful political exercise. Peace-loving Nepalese voted them to power. The Assembly turned the kingdom into a republic and monarchy became a history.

Peace to Nepalese however is still a distant dream. The *terai* (southern plane) is increasingly restive. Several armed outfits have risen up in the frontier and engaged in killing, abduction and extortion. Different organized ethnic groups have jumped into the protest bandwagon clamoring for rights, identity and share in power. Organized groups often take law in their hands. The situation in Nepal is chaotic. The law and order situation has worsened. And, impunity, according to different rights watch groups, has risen. Political parties quarrel and blame each other for the worsening situation. The country has plunged into uncertainty and chaos.

SETU Nepal was born and grew up amid Nepal's turbulent situation. Since 2003 up till now, spanning over a period of five years, it sailed in tricky waters. It has to do so for some more time to come.

With Maoists in government, Nepal's donors seem cautious about spending money. They are mostly pursuing wait and see policy. The war ravaged country is beset with problems of alarming proportion. The scars of armed conflict remain unhealed. Maoist's populist politics raised expectations of the poverty-smitten Nepalese to the sky. The euphoria rapidly died down. The government's poor delivery and worsening law and order situation has sowed seed of discontent, frustration and disenchantment among common Nepalese. The brewing discontent is feared to trigger further unrest and violence.

With politics of consensus thrown to the winds, and holier-than-thou attitude taken, the problems and challenges in the country are piling up. The cacophonous discontent and the noisy and violent protests characterize Nepalese society.

Given the gloomy scenario, SETU Nepal is faced with even greater challenge. It has to tread the path fraught with risk to reach the poor and vulnerable women. Worsening law and order situation and rising

impunity renders the conflict victim, ex-prisoner women, and single women more vulnerable. It is incumbent upon SETU Nepal, its allies and collaborators to reach to them and protect them. These poor, weak and vulnerable women may have to wait for years to receive the government's attention. The government may start mending the fence after the wolves take away the lambs.

The situation calls for meaningful intervention and engagement of SETU Nepal and several similar organizations.

SETU Nepal works through network of its allies and partners who are spread over the country and have deeper community level engagements. The strategic network has made its access to the poor, weak and vulnerable women easy. Though women ex-prisoners are still the target group of SETU Nepal, their numbers have gone down in recent years after the amendment of penal provisions in the National Civil Code. Thus SETU Nepal has shifted its focus on conflict victim women, single women, and the poor and vulnerable women.

In the year 2008, SETU Nepal provided entrepreneurship life skill to a total of 31 women. Of these 17 women received beautician training, and the other 14 acquired computer operational skills. Also 14 women are receiving the sewing training at the moment. Besides this, seven poor and vulnerable children were supported in education. They were enrolled, supported with teaching/learning materials, school uniforms, school bags, and meals.

SETU Nepal however underwent strategic shift in its operational strategy. Unlike in previous year, this year SETU Nepal preferred on-the-spot skill transfer and support over in-house training.

SETU Nepal based on its experience working with the poor and vulnerable women learnt that bringing women to Kathmandu and sheltering, feeding and training them involve huge cost. Also, these women snared by glitters of Kathmandu often shy away from going back their homes. This tendency increasing in Kathmandu-sheltered women defeats the purpose of community and family-based rehabilitation.

Bearing this in mind, SETU Nepal now works on a strategy whereby it identifies the poor, needy and vulnerable by visiting its networks in the villages, solicit their interest and expectations, develops skill training packages, conduct training, and finally equip them with resource and instruments to kick start their trade. This cuts down the cost of

sheltering and feeding them and also reduces the risk of women hanging out in Kathmandu.

SETU Nepal with meager resource to meet huge challenges finds the new strategic approach viable. This has lessened its burden and enabled it extend significant support in helping the weak, the poor and the vulnerable women in bringing changes into their lives.

The Report 2008 thus will exclusively focus on SETU Nepal's intervention details, achievements over the year, case studies, hurdles and the challenges and constraints. This will be done as objectively and sincerely as possible.

Strategic Activities 2008

SETU Nepal organized host of skill transfer trainings to the conflict victim women, single, poor, weak and vulnerable over the year 2008. The purpose was to empower them with life skills of their choice and preferences and support them in the utilization of acquired skills for a secured and dignified living. The life skills transferred to them were a) beautician training, b) sewing training, c) computer training. A few have utilized their skills and live off them; others are exploring options to utilize their newly acquired skills.

Details of the training and the progress so far are described below.

A. Beautician Training

In the year 2008, 17 women (conflict victim, single, weak, poor and vulnerable) received beautician training. SETU Nepal was able to harness and mobilize the services of Government-owned *Entrepreneurship Skill Development Center* for the skill transfer purposes. The Government owned organization provided the skilled manpower to conduct the training.

Prior to enlisting them for beautician training, these poor, weak, single and vulnerable women were inquired about their own choices and preferences. SETU Nepal also made a quick feasibility study of the marketability and prospects of the skills sought. Since most of these women were from urban centers, Kathmandu and the vicinity, which held better prospect for skill utilization, SETU Nepal decided to go with their choices.

(Please see annex for the names and other details of the seventeen women)

Of 17 women at least 5 of them are currently engaged in beautician trade and are successfully utilizing their skill and earning livelihood.

While *Binu Dhakal* and *Sujeeta Sitaula* have launched their own *Aanchal* Beauty Parlor in Kathmandu and working day in and day out to make it a success, *Junu Thapa*, a single woman dumped by her husband, is currently employed by a local beauty parlor. Two other women are currently engaged - one in own parlor and the other working as an employee.

Training shows *Junu* light at the end of tunnel

When her husband, an alcoholic and abuser, dumped Junu Thapa and disappeared, fear and anxiety engulfed her. Illiterate and unskilled, her own life grew a burden to her. She felt like groping in a dark tunnel with no hope. She worked as domestic servant washing plates and mopping floors. She had to make do with leftovers and little food she could afford. Says Junu, 'If SETU Nepal was not there I would still be mopping floor and washing soiled plates. I would have been caught in eternal drudgery, had they not shown light at the end of tunnel.'

Currently, Junu earns Rs. 2500/ a month. 'It is not the money what counts. I have regained my lost dignity, Junu says.

One other trainee *Shova Maharjan* has opened her own beauty parlor. The other woman *Sunita Adhikary* has put her acquired skill into use by working in a beauty parlor.

SETU Nepal has kept tracks of other women who have received training. While some are considering starting their own parlor through a joint initiative, others are on the look out for job.

B. Sewing Training

Altogether 7 women, mostly ex-prisoners and conflict victims, were provided with sewing training as well as candle-making in the year 2008 based on their choices. Nepal currently plunged in darkness witnessing 16 hours of load shedding (power cuts) a day creates greater prospects for candle trade.

(Please see annex for the names and other details)

Dark days are over

Hira Lama, 42, a resident of Hetauda, over 100 km off Kathmandu, received candle-making skill through SETU Nepal sponsored training.

An ex-prisoner convicted of girl-trafficking and sentenced to prison is now a successful candle trader. Besides, candle she also produces incense sticks used in religious purposes. Hira Lama earns approximately Rs. 3500/ a month from her candle-making trade. These are initial periods. She hopes to make greater income in days ahead. 'The load shedding is a blessing in disguise. I can't meet the demand. I need to enhance my production capacity, says Hira Lama.

Supported by equipments and kick-start money, Hira is now firmly entrenched in her trade. 'Dark days are over. New beginning has dawned, she says.

Of those acquiring sewing training, few have performed exemplarily. A case in point is *Seeta Pun*. Seeta has a traumatic past behind her. Failing to put up with the constant torture and abuse at the hands of her alcoholic husband, Seeta decided to end it for once and all. She hacked her inebriated husband to death and thrown behind the bar. When she came out after serving the sentence, she was collected by SETU Nepal and helped her find a new path.

Life shows the way

Seeta Pun 33, a resident of Dang district, western Nepal, has survived a violent and gory past. Mother of two children, Seeta served a long prison sentence for murdering her husband. Jailed at tender age, she came out at 33. There was no way she could go back to her village with the stigma. She had no idea where to go and how to fend for herself. SETU Nepal showed her the way. Seeta was given a month-long sewing training at the SETU Nepal training center. Upon successful completion of her training she was provided with a sewing machine and some seed money to start her life afresh. Her skill owned her a job in a garment factory. She now stands on her own feet. She is independent, fending for herself and her children. Says Seeta, ' I had never thought life would take this miraculous turn. One shouldn't give up living. Life shows the way.'

Other women with the sewing skill are stitching clothes of neighbors and others at homes for small income.

C. Computer training

Altogether 14 single, conflict victim, poor, weak and vulnerable women were provided with computer skills through training. The training was conducted in collaboration with the Government-owned *Entrepreneurship Skill Development Center*. The Center provided manpower while other arrangements were made by SETU Nepal.

To help and to facilitate effective implementation of training package, United Kingdom-based 'G5 Group' supported 4 computers including 1 laptop. Likewise, Shrinking Horizons, another Norway based institution, lent support of 3 computers to SETU Nepal for similar purposes.

Of 14 acquiring computer operational skills, one *Nani Chhori Maharjan*, single and vulnerable woman, has been successful to get employment at a local organization. Few others are engaged in honing their skills to build their competitive edges. SETU Nepal too is trying its level best to help them find job.

Educational support to poor and vulnerable children

In the year 2008 SETU Nepal supported 7 poor, weak and vulnerable children in education. They have been mostly conflict victims, children of ex-prisoners and single women. (*Please see annex for details about these children*).

SETU Nepal enrolled them in private boarding schools, paid their fees, supported with teaching/learning materials, school uniforms and meal. The academic performance of these children has been satisfactory. SETU Nepal periodically visits the school of children and takes stock of their progress.

Action Research on Women Prisoners in Nepalese prisons

In the year 2008, SETU Nepal did some research works corresponding with its area of interventions. SETU Nepal is known for working with ex-prisoner women. Over the past few years SETU Nepal focused exclusively on rehabilitation aspect shutting its eye to the causal factors landing women into prisons. SETU Nepal would receive women prisoners upon release, shelter and feed them, and equip and empower them with skills with the view to enabling them start life afresh. SETU Nepal however never knew if there were any space and scope for it to work on prevention aspect. The Action Research on women prisoners was carried out in the east, west and central region prisons of the country. It involved huge cost by SETU Nepal standard.

The research outcome however has been an eye opener for SETU Nepal. The report critically assessed the plight of women prisoners and highlighted the women's vulnerability factors i.e. illiteracy, ignorance, poverty, discrimination, patriarchal social set up etc which are responsible for incarcerating women.

The report also created space and scope for SETU Nepal to engage in prevention aspect in future. The areas that SETU Nepal might engage itself are a) legal awareness and empowerment, b) legal support to poor and weak, c) Advocacy and sensitization to law makers in favor of non-discriminatory and women friendly laws, d) Advocacy for probationary laws, etc.

Given the size of resource and manpower at SETU Nepal's disposal, these projects may be too ambitious for it. Nonetheless, SETU Nepal is working out to carve niche for itself.

Resource Mobilization

For resource mobilization please refer to income & expenditures details added in annex.

The best part of the whole initiative in the year 2008 was that SETU Nepal was able to mobilize support from both home and abroad. As mentioned above, the UK based G5 Group and Shrinking Horizon Norway were key supporters for the computer training scheme while Sandvika Rotary Club Norway and T Harvey Mathis Eye foundation – USA supported training and other programs. Also, SETU Nepal has been able to build good rapport with the Government owned *Entrepreneurship Skill Development Center*, Bhainsepati, Lalitpur, and mobilized manpower for effective training exercises.

Outcome & Impact

While few trained women empowered with skills have already gained opportunity to put their newly acquired skills into use, others are putting efforts and honing their skills. ONE year time span may be too small a period to assess impact of intervention. Nevertheless, at least half a dozen poor, weak, vulnerable women have made the most of it. Others are still engaged in struggle phase. SETU Nepal has set up a monitoring mechanism to keep an eye on the trained women. On its part, SETU Nepal is working with different organization to explore job possibilities for these women. Since economic security is the cornerstone of social and psychological security, SETU Nepal's effort is to equip and empower these women with instruments that can fetch them job. It may take time before all of them gain a secured and dignified life.

Challenges and Constraints

SETU Nepal over the past five years operated from a rented house in Kathmandu. It still is housed in a rented building. In the year 2008, SETU Nepal faced hassles and hindrances. The Social Welfare Council (SWC), the Government apex body to coordinate and facilitate NGO works, came up with the standard criterions to be met by all children homes and orphanages. It included among others healthy and spacious environment for children's physical and intellectual growth *plus* several other non-negotiable condition and facilities.

SETU Nepal in absence of those conditions and facilities suffered setback. Consequently, the Government apex body gave a negative rating to SETU Nepal.

In order to strike SETU Nepal off the Government negative list, it needs to build its own house with spacious ground and several mandatory facilities. SETU Nepal needs to purchase land in a road access site. Once the land is procured, SETU Nepal is capable of mobilizing support for the building construction. This initiative should be taken at the earliest.

Way Forward

SETU Nepal looks forward to continue its engagement with poor, weak, vulnerable and conflict victim women in days ahead. These women at risk and vulnerable in absence of skill and education deserve help and support. SETU Nepal's good works have yielded positive results. SETU Nepal while on one hand should give continuity to its good works; on the other hand, it should work hard to raise more resource to bring help and support to greater number of such women.

Annexes

1. Financial Report
2. List of trainees (Computer, Sewing and Beautician)
3. List of children enrolled in schools
4. Gist of Action Research Report
5. Relevant photographs

1. Financial Report

SETU Nepal
Financial Report for the year 2008

Receipt (in Rupees):

Date	Details	Amount	Amount
2008	Total grant received in the whole year		1,941,224

Expenses (in Rupees):

S.N.	Details	Amount	Amount
A	Program Expenses		
1	For Children:		
	Education		283,953
	Tuition Fee	170,259.00	
	Books and Stationery	45,486.00	
	Uniform	47,458.00	
	Educational Support	20,750.00	
2	For Women:		284,521
	Training Fee	25,041.00	
	Training Materials and Equipments	237,500.00	
	Miscellaneous Expenses	21,980.00	
	Transportation, Tiffin and Others		
3	Clothing		40,450
4	Traveling (Jail visits & Monitoring)		40,845
5	Recreation Activity		25,609
6	Food & Fruits(Residential Women & Children)		160,083
7	Auditing report & Bank charges		13,434
8	House Rent		148,500
9	Local Conveyance		20,103
10	Printing and Stationery		24,479
11	Supplies		25,492
12	Utilities		45,613
13	Miscellaneous		13,791
	Sub –Total Rs.		1,126,873
B	Overhead Expenses:		
1	Consultancy /Legal Advisor		11,000
2	Donation & Prize		0
3	Repair and Maintenance		32,136
4	Salaries for Staffs		219,466
5	Telephone & Communication		48,272
	Sub –Total Rs		310,874
	Total Expenses (A+B)		1,437,747
	Balance		503,477

SETU Nepal would like to thank our respective donor for great support for this year:

1. Sandvika Rotary Club - Norway
2. John Cheatham - T Harvey Mathis Eye foundation
3. Patricia Goodbody "G5" group
4. Glenn E Bond - Harvest Group
5. Wicki Van De Veer
6. Bill Norman
7. Association Luxembourg
8. Barbara Novak - Stephen R. Novak Foundation
9. Benson Lamb
10. Richard Jansen
11. Clayesmore School- UK
12. Graham Lamb
13. Montview Church
14. Redbridge Lions Club - UK
15. Ruby L Cortner
16. Shrinking Horizons - Norway
17. Susan Flynn
18. Karen Balowin
19. Jenny Conley
20. Moving Mountain - UK
21. Embarcadero Lions Club - USA
22. Kay Bixby
23. Barbara Bell
24. Yasmin Lakhi
25. Jim Booth

2. List of Trainees (Computer, Sewing and Beautician)

Name list of Beautician Trainee

1. Ambika Kumari Shrestha
2. Aruna Bhattarai
3. Asmita Bhattarai
4. Babita Devi Nepal
5. Binu Bhandari (dhakal)
6. Gamk Kumari Bhujel
7. Junu Thapa
8. Laxmi Dhamala
9. Manju Maharjan
10. Menuka Devi Nepal
11. Sakuntala Khanal
12. Sapna Devi Poudel
13. Shova Bajgain
14. Shobha Maharjan
15. Sumitra Adhakari
16. Shobha Rijal
17. Sujita Sitaula

Name list of Computer Trainee

1. Sarala Parajuli
2. Shakuntala Panta
3. Pampha Bhandari (Pandey)
4. Sushila Nepal
5. Nani Chori Maharjan
6. Lila Aryal (Khanal)
7. Lila Maya Ghimire
8. Nita Lamichhane
9. Gayatri Lamichhane (Rimal)
10. Sanjiwani Gharti
11. Shobha Rijal
12. Prabha Pandey (Joshi)
13. Tulasa Pyakurel (Bhandari)
14. Apsara Rijal (Lamichhane)

Name List of Sewing Trainee

1. Sanu Maya Shrestha
2. Sunita Shrestha
3. Kamala Simkhada
4. Chandra Gurung
5. Purna Maya Dhungel
6. Kusum K.C
7. Gita K.C
8. Shova Simkhada
9. Ganu K.C
10. Pawatra Rimal
11. Sabitri Thakuri
12. Dhan Maya Gurung
13. Usha Phuyal
14. Devi Lamsal

3. List of children enrolled in schools

S. No	Name	Age	Grade	School	Sponsored and their country	Sponsor needed
1.	Miss Kumari Bishwokarma	14	1	Drop out from School	Michele Leighton (UK)	-
2.	Miss Rita Bishwokarma	13	1	Drop out from School	-	-
3.	Miss Madavi Kandel	10	6	Shree Nimmna Madhyamik Vidhalay	Karl Benny (Norway)	-
4.	Mr Ramesh Biswokarma	10	1	Shree Nepal Matri Griha Primary School	London Probation (UK)	-
5.	Miss Sanchita Lama	5	U.K.G	Shree Kumari Secondary School	Sarah Adamson (UK)	-
6.	Miss Sudha Nepal	12	4	Brilliant English Boarding School	Ruby Cortner (USA)	-
7.	Mr Suraj Nepal	10	3	Brilliant English Boarding School	Mary Wallace (USA)	-
8.	Miss Apsara Ghimire	12	4	Brilliant English Boarding School	Marriane McFarland (UK)	-
9.	Mr Madan Krishna Ghimire	10	2	Brilliant English Boarding School	Susan Carcavella (UK)	-
10.	Mr Krishna Lama	6	U.K.G.	National Modal Science School	Brian & Barbara Lewis (UK)	-
11.	Mr Keshab Sharma Pandit	5	U.K.G.	National Modal Science School	Vivienne McNaughton (UK)	-
12.	Miss Anju Nepali	8	L.K.G.	Shree Ganodaya English Boarding School	Michele Leighton (UK)	
13.	Miss Manju Nepali	8	U.K.G	Shree Ganodaya English Boarding School	-	Sponsor needed
14.	Miss Junu Nepali	7	U.K.G.	National Star School	-	Sponsor needed
15.	Mr Sushil Nepali	5	Nursery	National Star School	-	Sponsor needed
16.	Mr Nabin Nepali	5	Nursery	Shree Ganodaya English Boarding School	London Probation - HRM Department(UK)	-
17.	Mr Govinda Kandel	7	U.K.G.	Parijat Boarding School, Chitwan	Jenny Conley (USA)	-
18.	Mr Ram Pun	7	U.K.G	National Star School	Peter Studd (UK)	-
19.	Mr Laxman Pun	7	U.K.G	National Star School	Tim Pagan (UK)	-
20.	Mr Yubraj Khadka	9	3	Sishu Nikitan Boarding School	Kate Gilbert (UK)	-
21.	Mr Saroj Shah	4	Nursery	Drop out from school	-	-
22.	Mr Sachine Ale	2 ½	Nursery	Sagarmantha English School	Linda Johnson, UK	-
23.	Mr Bikram Kapali	8	L.K.G	Shree Nepal Matri Griha Primary School	Liv Inger Nordstiein, Norway	-
24.	Mr Prithivi Sagar Gotame	5	Nursery	Shree Nepal Matri Griha Primary School	Jenny Conley, Wicki Van De Veer (USA)	-
Total		24			19	3

4. Gist of Action Research Report

The Action Research conducted inside prisons of East, Central and West region among 154 women prison inmates have thrown up some eye-opening facts which were hitherto unearthed. From the research which is fed and shaped by views and opinions of the prison inmates it can't be completely ruled out that some innocents may have been punished which goes against the principles of justice which says that no innocent should get hangman's noose even if dozens of culprits go off the hook. Women serving prison sentences in Nepal on different charges, are mostly illiterate, or women who can barely read and write. The number of educated women serving sentences is negligible. Similarly, it is under doubt whether these women received fair trial as many deny having received legal aid and access and recourse to court of law. They claim to have been victims of family feud, people pursuing personal vendetta, political intrigue etc. They claim that justice had been denied to them largely because they didn't have enough resources to hire a strong defense counsel to make out a strong case, or because they lacked knowledge about law, legal provisions and legal proceedings, or their adversaries had been too powerful and resourceful to fight against etc. Of course, poverty has been a major driving factor for women to commit crime or become unwitting accomplices. In some cases, the police under political pressure or to pursue personal vendetta reportedly coerced women to confess crimes which they didn't commit.

Given the sorrowful scenario, in Nepal there are certainly some flaws or lapses in the whole judicial system and judicial process. Women particularly illiterate, gullible and ignorant in the far flung hills and Tarai are yet to gain access to fair trial and feared to have been discriminated on grounds of their status, gender and race. It is therefore absolutely imperative that some steps and measures be taken to create a women friendly situation and ensure their access to legal aid and fair trial. New Nepal in making every one should enjoy an unfettered access to legal aid and a fair trial. For this to happen, both the government and non-government organizations should initiate efforts in the direction of change.



Durga Gotame Taking Sewing Training Course



Setu Nepafa Children



Children in their School Dress



Hira Lama busy in making Candle

